

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1.-4. (Canceled).

5. (Currently Amended) A welding ~~shield gas~~method according to claim ~~4~~6, wherein the inert gas is argon gas.

6. (Currently Amended) A welding method for non-consumable electrode arc welding of welded material, the welded material comprising austenitic stainless steel having a Ca concentration not less than 1 wt.ppm, and the welding method comprising:

a step of using ~~the~~ a welding shield gas according to claim ~~1~~ comprising an inert gas and nitrogen gas, the concentration of the nitrogen gas being 5 to 95 vol%.

7. (Previously Presented) A welding method according to claim 6, wherein the welding material is a fixed tube, and further comprising a step of welding the welded material while it remains stationary while moving a welding torch.

8. (Previously Presented) A welding method according to claim 6, the welded material comprising: at least one of Al at a concentration not less than 10 wt.ppm, and Si at a concentration not less than 0.3 wt.ppm.

9. (Previously Presented) A welding method for non-consumable electrode arc welding of a welding material comprising austenitic stainless steel, the welding method comprising welding a material comprising austenitic stainless steel using a welding shield gas comprising an inert gas, nitrogen gas, and helium gas, wherein the concentration of the nitrogen gas is not less than 1 vol% and less than 65 vol%, and the concentration of the helium gas is 35 to 95 vol%.

10. (Previously Presented) A welding method according to claim 9, wherein a combined

concentration of the nitrogen and helium is 35 to 95 vol%.

11. (Previously Presented) A welding method according to claim 6, wherein the welding material has a thickness not more than 3 mm.

12. (Previously Presented) A welding method according to claim 6, wherein a welding current is equal to or less than 100A.

13. (Previously Presented) A welding method according to claim 6, wherein a welding speed is 50 to 150 mm/min.

14. (Previously Presented) A welding method according to claim 6, wherein concentrations of each of Ca, Al, and Si in the welding material are in a range of:

$0.42 \leq 1000 \times \text{Ca concentration (wt. \%)} + 20 \times \text{Al concentration (wt. \%)} + \text{Si concentration (wt. \%)}.$

15. (Previously Presented) A welding method according to claim 6, wherein concentrations of each of Ca, Al, and Si in the welding material are in a range of:

$0.90 \leq 1000 \times \text{Ca concentration (wt. \%)} + 20 \times \text{Al concentration (wt. \%)} + \text{Si concentration (wt. \%)}.$